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Bush Pays Tribute to Month of Ramadan at White House Iftar Dinner

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

October 16, 2006

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT AT IFTAR DINNER

The State Dining Room
6:52 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Please be seated. Good evening and "Ramadan Karim." Welcome to the White House. Laura and I are really glad you're here. This is the sixth year that we have been pleased to host an Iftar at the



President George W. Bush addresses the Iftar Dinner with Ambassadors and Muslim leaders in the State Dining Room of the White House, Monday, Oct. 16, 2006.
White House photo by Paul Morse

White House. We're honored to be with you and once again we're

honored to pay tribute to the month of Ramadan.

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USAID Director Glenn Anders Visits Pastoralist Community in Oromia State

USAID interventions help community survive drought

Addis Ababa (U.S. Embassy) -- USAID Mission Director Glenn Anders paid a visit on October 13, 2006 to the pastoralist community of Tuka in Borena Zone, Oromia State. Twelve elders of the local Borena group, along with the head of the local administration, discussed the condition of the pastoralist community in the area. The eld-



Glenn Anders
USAID Mission Director

ers began by thanking Mr. Anders for the support of the people of the United States they received during the drought that occurred earlier in 2006.

USAID's unique intervention, through the Italian-based NGO, Lay Volunteers International Association (LVIA), provided

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Ambassador Huddleston Hosts Ramadan Iftar

U.S. Charge D' Affaires Ambassador Vicki Huddleston hosted an Iftar with members of Addis Ababa's Muslim community on October 18, 2006. Guests included religious leaders, business leaders, ranking government officials, NGOs and academicians. Guests broke their fast and performed maghreb prayers, and they enjoyed an Iftar buffet.

In her remarks, Ambassador Huddleston praised Ethiopia's historic tradition of religious tolerance. Sheikh Elias Redman, Vice President of the Islamic Affairs Supreme Council, thanked the Ambassador for her hospitality and the U.S. Mission's support of Muslim groups working in the HIV/AIDS sector. He shared his hope that the Muslim community and the U.S. Mission can strengthen their relationship with continuing contact. ♦

Some pictures of the event



President Bush Signs Darfur Peace and Accountability Act

By Carrie Loewenthal
Washington File Special Correspondent

Washington -- President Bush signed into law October 13 the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act of 2006 (DPAA) and issued an executive order "blocking property of and prohibiting transactions with the Government of Sudan."



President George W. Bush

The DPAA imposes sanctions against "persons responsible for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity; supports measures for the protection of civilians and humanitarian operations; and supports peace efforts in the Darfur region of Sudan," a White House statement says.

The president's executive order, which takes effect upon the enactment of the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act, specifically forbids transactions relating to Sudan's petroleum and petrochemical industries, sectors in which the president noted that "the Government of Sudan has a pervasive role" that poses a "threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States."

In a letter to the speaker of the House of Representatives and the president of the Senate, Bush

notes that "the Government of Sudan continues to implement policies and actions that violate human rights, in particular with respect to the conflict in Darfur, where the Government of Sudan exercises administrative and legal authority and pervasive practical influence."

The executive order extends the sanctions already in place but exempts from the prohibitions certain areas in Sudan, including Southern Sudan, Southern Kordofan/Nuba Mountains State, Blue Nile State, Abyei, Darfur and marginalized areas in and around Khartoum, "provided that the activities or transactions do not involve any property or interests in property of the Government of Sudan," the president said.

The DPAA and the executive order do not limit or restrict humanitarian aid to Darfur. The United States has provided more than \$1 billion in humanitarian assistance to the people of Sudan, including \$400 million during the past 12 months, for emergency food aid to the region.

The United States has been calling for a swift U.N. action to stop the humanitarian crisis in Darfur. On October 2, speaking with U.S. Special Envoy for Sudan Andrew Natsios President Bush said the United Nations "should not wait any longer to approve a blue-helmeted force, a U.N. force of peacekeepers, to protect the innocent people." He also characterized the "suffering and deprivation" of the people of Darfur as genocide.

The peacekeeping mission in Dar-

fur is currently lead by the African Union (AU), which has stated it is unable to continue the effort. In August, the Security Council authorized the expansion of the U.N. Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) -- which supports the implementation of Sudan's Peace Agreement of 2005 -- by 20,000 troops and police to take over peacekeeping duties in Darfur from the AU. However, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir has been refusing to accept the transition.

The United Nations estimates that more than 200,000 people have died in the Darfur region of Sudan since 2003. Close to 2 million others were displaced into refugee camps in the province and in eastern Chad.

The full texts of the president's executive order (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/10/20061013-14.html>) on Sudan and his letter (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/10/20061013-16.html>) to the speaker of the House and the President of the Senate are available on the White House Web site.

For additional information, see Darfur Humanitarian Emergency (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/darfur.html>).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

United States Must Remain Highly Engaged in Africa

By Bruce Greenberg
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Sub-Saharan Africa must be a primary component of U.S. foreign policy because it will continue to grow in importance to U.S. economic and strategic interests as the decade progresses, a panel of policy specialists stressed February 22.

The panel discussion, organized by the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) and held at its Washington headquarters, spotlighted CFR's recently published independent task force report, *More Than Humanitarianism: A Strategic U.S. Approach Toward Africa*.

The report's two project directors, CFR's Princeton Lyman and J. Stephen Morrison of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), discussed many of the report's themes and recommendations.

Morrison mentioned U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's recent policy address on "transformational diplomacy," with its emphasis on reallocating a heavily weighted U.S. diplomatic presence in Western and Northern Europe to less-developed areas of the world, such as Africa. He said this reallocation would fill a gap in terms of U.S. security in the region and would increase U.S. public diplomacy engagement.

"To have the secretary say, 'Let's step back and take a new look at the way we do foreign aid and

how we engage in countries and regions,' is refreshing, because in Africa there are a lot of resources flowing and new ways to coordinate our aid and trade programs," he added.

Lyman complimented Rice "on this new phase of engagement" with the developing world. "What you have," he said, "is a big switch in American foreign policy, away from Russia and Europe to the areas where our interests are heavily engaged in a new way."

Africa always has been a bipartisan issue in the United States, unlike Iraq, Lyman said. "If you look at all the recent initiatives on Africa -- MCC [Millennium Challenge Corporation], AGOA [African Growth and Opportunity Act] or PEPFAR [President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief] -- you have strong bipartisan support. That's a plus."

AFRICAN LEADERSHIP IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Responding to a question from the audience on conflict resolution in Africa, Lyman said U.S. involvement needs to be more flexible so that "we can deal with more than one crisis at a time."

Lyman also recognized "a tremendous growth in African leadership in conflict resolution -- the Africans who have been in the forefront in helping to negotiate an end to war in the Congo, as they are in the lead in trying to bring a political solution in Darfur." African

leadership in the political process has been critical "in whatever progress has been made" in these and other conflicts, he said.

In regard to supplying foreign aid to energy-rich areas of Africa, Morrison said, "We are calling for a high-level forum that would begin to get leadership committed to norms of accountability and transparency. We need to find the reformers and support them."

He called for "greater flexibility" and "the kind of geopolitical shift that puts a much higher priority on this region within the White House and within the upper reaches of the State Department."

Commenting on the progress of democratization on the continent, Lyman called for a doubling of resources in the region to help Africans demand accountability from their governments.

China was mentioned as a very real competitor with the United States because of its aggressive economic programs in sub-Saharan Africa, but Lyman was critical of the country for seeming to ignore human rights and corruption in favor of "business for business' sake."

Morrison said that Sudan has been an example "where China and the U.S. have collided" in terms of blocking effective sanctions on the Khartoum government in response to armed militias' violence in Darfur. Similarly, "with [President

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Bush Pays Tribute to Month of Ramadan at White House . . .

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Islam is a religion that brings hope and comfort to more than a billion people around the world. It has transcended racial and ethnic divisions. It has given birth to a rich culture of learning and literature and science. And tonight we honor the traditions of a great faith by hosting the Iftaar here at the White House.

I'm so pleased our Secretary of State, Condi Rice, has joined us. Thank you, Madam Secretary. I'm pleased that Dr. Elias Zerhouni, who is the Director of the NIH, is with us. Good to see you, Elias. I thank Imam Eid, from the Islamic Institute of Boston, is with us. I welcome all the ambassadors and other members of the Diplomatic Corps.

Ramadan is the holiest month in the Muslim calendar. For Muslims in America and around the world, Ramadan is a special time of prayer and fasting, contemplation of God's greatness, and charity and service to those in need. And for people of all faiths, it is a good time to reflect on the values we hold in common, including love of family, gratitude to God, the importance of community, and a commitment to tolerance and religious freedom.

America is a land of many faiths, and we welcome and honor the Muslim faith in our nation. Our society is enriched by our Muslim citizens. Your commitment to your faith reminds us all of the precious gift of religious freedom in

our country. America is a more hopeful nation because of the talents and generosity and compassion of our Muslim citizens.

Tonight we have with us a group of special guests -- American Muslims who are serving our country. We have with us New York City police officers and a EMT worker who risked their lives to save their fellow citizens on 9/11; a military doctor and a member of the Navy's Chaplain Corps; members of our Foreign Service; and military veterans who have served in Afghanistan and Iraq to protect our country and help those nations build free and democratic futures.

One of our guests is Farooq Muhammed. Farooq is the son of Pakistani immigrants, and was born and raised in Brooklyn. He spent the past decade with the New York City Fire Department, first as an emergency medical technician and now as a paramedic. Farooq was at the World Trade Center on 9/11, treating victims when the towers collapsed -- he narrowly escaped death himself. He also recently volunteered in the mountains of Kashmir, where he helped treat the victims of last year's devastating South Asian earthquake. Farooq's courage and compassion represent the best of the American spirit.

Paramedic Muhammed is a proud Muslim; he is a patriotic American. And those are characteristics he shares with the other special American guests gathered in this room. All of you bring credit to your faith. You make America a

better and stronger country, and we're honored by your presence tonight. (Applause.)

The United States also appreciates the many Muslim nations who stand with us in the war on terror -- some of whom are represented here tonight. You know that the majority of the victims of the terrorists have been innocent Muslims, and many of you have seen terrorist violence in your own cities and your streets. We welcome you here. We are proud to work with you to defeat the terrorists and extremists, and help bring a brighter future to millions of Muslim people throughout the world who yearn for moderation and peace.

On this special evening, we celebrate the millions of Muslims that we are proud to call American citizens. We honor the many Islamic nations that America is proud to call friends. And we renew the ties of friendship that should bind all who trace their faith back to God's call on Abraham.

Laura and I are grateful that you're here. Once again, I wish you a blessed Ramadan. And now Imam Eid will say the blessing.

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)♦

Trade Still Prime Engine for Prosperity in Africa, Official Says

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- International trade is still one of the best ways to lift Africa from poverty into prosperity and political stability, says Christopher Moore, U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state for trade policy and programs.

"The U.S. trade agenda is a vital component of our overall strategy to work with African partners to promote liberty, peace, stability and increasing prosperity," Moore told a Washington gathering of U.S. ambassadors to Africa. Moore made his comments during an October 12 panel discussion about trade opportunities on the continent.

"We have seen all too well the evidence that poverty breeds violence and fuels political instability," Moore told the diplomats.

"That is a chief reason why the United States and other World Trade Organization [WTO] members embraced the goal of alleviating poverty through increased trade flows as the core of the Doha Development Agenda."

He said that in September a new national security presidential directive on the U.S. strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa was established. Under the directive, the United States will work with African reformers to do the following:

Stimulate private-sector development,

Increase Africa's trade competitiveness, and

Increase trade integration within Africa itself and the global economy.

Despite the trend toward trade liberalization, Moore said, WTO negotiations, called the Doha round, were suspended at the end of July, "primarily over members' differences on agriculture." (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2006&m=July&x=20060724145101ebye3.396243e-02>).

Moore said, "The number one reason for the suspension is plain and simple: we are out of sync with the European Union [EU] on agriculture. The U.S. offered a far-reaching proposal on agriculture, but the EU was unable to make any significant movement in this area."

To revive the Doha round, formally called the Doha Development Agenda, he said, U.S. Trade Representative Susan Schwab "is going to every corner of the globe to get the talks restarted. Her next such trip is to the African Union Trade Ministers Summit in Addis Ababa [Ethiopia] on October 30-31."

Moore added that it is "imperative that African countries realize their stake in the round."

He said Africa stands to benefit "across the board from a successful Doha round that will open up new markets by cutting tariffs, reducing trade-distorting subsidies and supporting sub-Saharan Africa's efforts to integrate more fully into the global trading system."

But Africans also need to "engage in reductions of their own tariffs," the U.S. official added. For example, he said, it now costs \$75 per ton to ship grain from Iowa to Mombasa, Kenya, while it costs \$100 per ton to ship similar cargo from Kampala, Uganda, to Mombasa.

Moore told the U.S. ambassadors that the main message they should take back to their host countries is that "it is imperative that African states position their trade regimes to take full advantage of the increasingly open global economy."

The United States is doing its part by doubling the number of its trade and investment framework agreements (TIFAs) in Africa, Moore said.

"We have launched new TIFAs with Rwanda and Mauritius, and are exploring signing TIFAs with

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USAID Director Glenn Anders Visits Pastoralist Community in . . .

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improved cattle fodder to the community. One cow per family was fed using nutritious feed, including molasses brought in from the city of Nazareth, more than 600 kilometers away. Although other animals died, these cows all survived the terrible drought. USAID interventions, including emergency animal vaccinations, and support for traders to come from Addis Ababa to purchase cattle before they died from the drought, helped this local community to survive better than they ever have before.

"Without the help that we received from local NGOs supported by USAID, our community would never have survived the terrible drought last spring," said Dida Dabaso, one of the elders. For his part, Mr. Anders told the group

that, "the U.S. Government considers our efforts in the pastoralist areas of Ethiopia to be extremely important. While there is more work to be done to develop long lasting solutions to the problems caused by recurring droughts, we are happy that we were able to intervene in time and with a program that responded appropriately and quickly to the needs of the people of Tuka."

The Tuka support was one small example of the many emergency and long term efforts with pastoralists that USAID is funding through the USD 29 million Pastoralist Livelihoods Initiative (PLI). The program provides emergency feeding and animal health interventions, early de-stocking assistance, and an extensive program in improved marketing, which includes building of livestock markets, and

development and training of local marketing institutions.

Mr. Anders also toured two new livestock marketplaces being constructed under the supervision of USAID partners Save the Children USA and ACDI/VOCA. He also visited a livestock water well site, which provides a source of water for livestock during droughts, and is implemented by USAID partner CARE International.♦

United States Must Remain Highly Engaged in . . .

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Robert] Mugabe in Zimbabwe."

"We believe that in the broader context, a serious and strategic dialogue with China can begin to bring those issues forward," he said.

"They want to be seen as a major 'player' in the world, and to be a major 'player' you have to carry a certain degree of responsibility," Lyman said.

With regard to the proper role for the U.S. private sector in Africa's

development, Lyman said that even though American business largely has been involved in the extractive industries, "we should encourage involvement on a grander scale" and prod African states to come together to invest jointly in the United States.

He added that the Bush administration's Millennium Challenge Corporation is playing a positive role in the development of democracy in Africa.

For more information on U.S. policy in the region, see Africa (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/>) and Millen-

nium Challenge Account (http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/mca.html).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)♦

Somali Women Hope To Affect Khartoum Peace Talks

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The women of Somalia have a critical role to play in laying the foundation for sustainable peace in their war-torn nation by acting as a bridge between rival political movements and clans, says Asha Elmi, a member of Parliament of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG).

Elmi says she plans to "vigorously pursue" that objective if the TFG adds her to the delegation headed for a third round of peace talks set to begin in Khartoum October 30. Somalia has been in civil conflict since the government of President Siad Barre was ousted in 1991.

The Somali lawmaker spoke at an October 13 luncheon sponsored by the National Democratic Institute (NDI), which operates special U.S.-government-funded programs aimed at improving the parliamentary skills of the 23 women legislators in the TFG Parliament.

Somalia has no national government at present, according to State Department background notes. However, it does have a transitional government, the components of which are known as the Somalia Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs). The TFIs include a transitional parliament, known as the Transitional Federal Assembly, and the TFG, which includes a transitional president, prime minister and a Cabinet.

The TFG, recognized by the United States and the United Nations, was the product of a political compromise by Somalis meeting in Yemen in January. However, its

authority never extended much beyond the provincial capital of Baidoa. The former national capital of Mogadishu and its surrounding area remained under the sway of clan warlords.

In June, a movement called the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) seized control of Mogadishu and ousted those warlords. A major armed clash between the TFG and the ICU was averted when the Arab League intervened and brought the parties together to discuss political power-sharing in talks at Khartoum, Sudan. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2006&m=July&x=200607121215111EJreh siFO.2149317>).

Elmi, who played an instrumental role in the formation of the TFG and as a negotiator with the ICU, said, "Our main mission now must be to make the Khartoum talks fruitful."

Women increasingly are playing a greater role in public life in Somalia, Elmi said, because "as in all civil conflicts, women and children have been the first victims." Since men have been doing the fighting for the past 15 years, women have become more involved in commerce and political affairs. "Now, we want to play a vital role in promoting peace and political participation," she said.

Elmi and other Somali women carved out a role for themselves in the talks leading to the agreement creating the TFG and its parliament. To break the logjam of in-

ter-clan conflict, she said, "we used the women to be a bridge among the warring clans; to promote a culture of peace and a spirit of reconciliation."

Thus, "Somali women became 'ambassadors of peace,'" Elmi said. This important status, she added, enabled the establishment of a single Somali women's voice and the formation of the "Somali Women's Clan" or, as it is sometimes called, "The Sixth Clan." Somalia has five, mainly male-dominated traditional clans.

This was a "notable and historic achievement," Elmi said, because previous peace talks had always involved just armed parties. But



Somali women studying

inclusion of the Sixth Clan meant that civil society also became a part of the peace process.

A direct result of the Sixth Clan's influence in the negotiations leading up to the TFG was the establishment of a quota of 12 percent of parliamentary representation for women and the establishment of a Ministry of Women. Later after the TFG was formed, the Sixth Clan also became a lobbying force for women's and children's causes in the TFG.

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Rwandan Genocide Survivors Weave Baskets for Better Life

Washington -- A recently expanded Rwanda Path to Peace project is helping thousands of survivors of Rwanda's 1994 genocide lead more successful lives through the sale of handmade peace baskets.

Founded in 2005 by American businesswoman Willa Shalit, the project aims to develop an American market for Rwandan women's crafts through a partnership with its sponsor, U.S. retailing giant Macy's. It began at Macy's Herald Square in New York and will be extended across the United States on Macys.com and in select Macy's stores, according to a recent announcement by the department store.

"The Macy's Rwanda Path to Peace project has given thousands of women the opportunity to show their strength, talent and pride in ways they never thought possible," Shalit said in a recent Macy's press release. "These amazing women are rising to the occasion by providing the Rwandan culture hope for a better future," she added.

The Rwanda Path to Peace project was established to create a viable, sustainable export business that provides economic stability and promotes an environment of peace that will positively influence Rwanda's future for its 8 million citizens. Its basic concept is that women helping each other can change the way Rwanda rebuilds its society, empowering women and sustaining economic development beyond traditional development assistance.

Commenting on the value of the project, the U.S. Ambassador to Rwanda, Michael Arietti, said for

many of the women who participate in the program, it is the only source of income that they have or maybe even the family has because ninety percent of the people are subsistence farmers who "grow what they eat. So it has brought a lot of income to rural women in particular."

Additionally, Arietti said, women often make their baskets individually but then come together to sell them to the female-run cooperative. "That brings together people whose husbands or families who were killed in the genocide and



those women whose husbands or children were perpetrators in the genocide. So you get people talking and collaborating in ways that you would perhaps not otherwise get."

Ronnie Taffet, vice president of public relations for Macy's corporate marketing in New York, added: "This is a real business partnership for Rwandan women. Together, we have made a significant impact on the lives of these women by creating an opportunity for them to change their future in a positive way."

The women receive one-third of the retail price of the baskets -- an unprecedented amount of income for individual rural households. The project has the potential to generate millions of dollars for the country, positively affecting the millions of Rwandans who normally live on less than \$1 a day.

Thousands of children have become direct beneficiaries of the basket program as basket-derived income provides funding for food, clothing, school uniform and supplies that previously were unattainable.

The baskets are made from papyrus, banana leaf, sweetgrass and sisal, depending on the region in which the basket is made.

Increased revenue from the expansion of "peace basket" sales to Macy's nationwide will benefit Rwandans through education, HIV/AIDS treatment, medical care, anti-violence programs and housing, according to the company.

Reinterpreting traditional Rwandan designs with bright, bold colors, the Gahaya Links Association organized 500 weavers in the Gitarama region of Rwanda to weave the baskets bound for Macy's. Their creations, in different sizes and shapes, retail for between \$8 and \$110.

The baskets evoke many traditions of Rwanda; since ancient times they have been used as containers of secrets, as wedding presents from a bride to her mother-in-law, or as lasting symbols of friendship between women.

In addition to the baskets' availability on Macys.com, special shops will be created in Macy's stores in Chicago and Atlanta to call attention to the baskets and the story of the Rwandan weavers.

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)♦

Muslims in America Enjoy Gift of Religious Freedom, President Says

By Carolee Walker
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – The commitment of Muslims to practice their faith in America is a reminder of the gift of religious freedom in the United States, President Bush said at the White House October 16.

"America is a land of many faiths, and we welcome and honor the Muslim faith in our nation," Bush told his guests at a White House iftar dinner honoring Muslim paramedics and police officers from New York City who helped rescue survivors on September 11, 2001, and Muslim Americans who serve in the U.S. military.

"America is a more hopeful nation because of the talents and generosity and compassion of our Muslim citizens," Bush added.

During the month of Ramadan, which this year ends on October 22, Muslims around the world refrain from eating or drinking during daylight hours and break their fast at nightly iftar dinners at sunset. Iftar dinners are intended to be community gatherings where Muslims invite family and friends to join in the festive meal. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=October&x=20061012150202hmnietua0.3526422>).

President Bush said Islam is a religion that transcends race and eth-

nicity, bringing hope and comfort to billions of people worldwide. He said for Muslims in America and in other countries, Ramadan is a time of charity and service to those in need.



Young Muslims read a flyer for a Ramadan celebration at an Islamic school in Villa Park, Illinois.

AP Images

"For people of all faiths, it is a good time to reflect on the values we hold in common, including love of family, gratitude to God, the importance of community and a commitment to tolerance and religious freedom."

Bush said the United States appreciates support from its Muslim al-

lies in the war on terror. "We are proud to work with you to defeat the terrorists and extremists, and help bring a brighter future to millions of Muslim people throughout the world who yearn for moderation and peace."

Dinner guests included U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes, National Institutes of Health Director Elias Zerhouni, Imam Talal Eid of the Islamic Institute of Boston, and ambassadors and members of the U.S. diplomatic corps.

The full text (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/10/20061016-6.html>) of Bush's remarks is available on the White House Web site.

For more on U.S. society, see Population and Diversity (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/history_geography_and_population_and_diversity.html) and International Religious Freedom (http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/human_rights/intl_religious_freedom.html).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

Islamic Society Director Challenges Extremist Views

Kill us, too: We are also Americans Radical Muslims not worthy of the religion

By ASLAM ABDULLAH

Special to the Review-Journal:

September 10, 2006

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The leader of al-Qaida in Iraq, Abu Hamza al-Muhajer, recently issued a decree to its supporters: Kill at least one American in the next two weeks "using a sniper rifle, explosive or whatever the battle may require."

Well, Abu Hamza al-Muhajer, I am an American too. Count me as the one of those you have asked your supporters to kill.

I am not alone. There are thousands of Muslims with me in Las Vegas, and many more millions in America, who are proud Americans and who are ready to face your challenge. You hide in your caves and behind the faces of civilians in Afghanistan and Iraq. You don't show your faces and you have no guts to face Muslims. You thrive on the misery of thousands of Muslim youth and children who are victims of despotism, poverty and ignorance.

During the past two decades, you have brought nothing but shame and disaster to your religion and your world.

You said you "invite you not to drop your weapons, and don't let your souls or your enemies rest until each one of you kills at least one American within a period that

does not exceed 15 days with a sniper's gunshot or incendiary devices or Molotov cocktail or a suicide car bomb -- whatever the battle may require." I invite you to surrender, to seek forgiveness from God almighty for the senseless killing you and your supporters are involved in and repent for everything you have done.

You say that the word of God is the highest. Yes, it is. But you are not worthy of it. You have abandoned God and you have started worshipping your own satanic egos that rejoice at the killing of innocent people. You don't represent Muslims or, for that matter, any decent human being who believes in the sanctity of life. Many among us American Muslims have differences with our administration on domestic and foreign issues, just like many other Americans do. But the plurality of opinions does not mean that we deprive ourselves of the civility that God demands from us. America is our home and will always be our home. Its interests are ours, and its people are ours. When you talk of killing of Americans, you first have to kill 6 million or so Muslims who will stand for every American's right to live and enjoy the life as commanded by God.

By growing a beard, shouting some religious slogans and misquoting and misusing some verses of the divine scriptures, you cannot incite Muslims to do things that are contrary to our religion. Yes, you even fail to understand

the basic Islamic principles of life and living. Islam demands peace in all aspects of life, Islam demands respect for life. Islam demands justice.

What you are doing in Iraq, Afghanistan, India or other parts of the world is anti-human and anti-divine. You are an enemy of Islam as much as you are an enemy of America. You must understand that God who entrusted you with life is the same God who spelled his spirit in every human being regardless of his or her religion or ethnicity or nationality or status. You are violating him.

We feel totally disgusted with your action and we condemn you without any reservation. Don't come to our mosques to preach this hatred. Don't visit our Islamic centers to spill the blood of innocents. Don't think that just because we share the same religion, we would show some sympathy to you. You are not of us. You don't belong to the religion whose followers are trying to live a peaceful life for themselves and others serving the divine according to their understanding. In our understanding of faith, you appear as anti-divine and anti-human. We reject you now as we rejected you yesterday.

There is nothing common between you and us.

We stand for life, you want to destroy it.

(Continued on page 16)

U.S. Ethnic, Religious Groups Mobilize and Educate Voters

By Michelle Austein
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- With the 2006 mid-term elections three weeks away, ethnic, religious and other groups in the United States are working to inform their communities of the issues at stake and the importance of voting.

Congressional candidates of both parties met with 300 Arab Americans at an iftar dinner October 15 in Fairfax County, Virginia. The dinner, hosted by the Arab American Institute, was an opportunity for some of the 21,500 Arab American voters in the county to hear directly from those running for office.

In observance of Ramadan, Muslims refrain from eating or drinking during daylight hours and break their fast at nightly iftar dinners, which are often festive family and community events.

Candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate discussed their views on national and local issues of special interest to the Arab American community, such as mosque-zoning regulations, and issues of importance to residents of all backgrounds, including transportation and education. Such a "meet-the-candidates night" is an evening when "we as Virginians can meet face to face with the people who shape our government," said Helen Samhan, executive director of the Arab American Institute Foundation, a division of the Arab American Institute that focuses on Arab American political involvement.

Along with campaign flyers and stickers from the candidates, the dinner hall was decorated with

posters saying in English and Arabic, "Our vote is our power, let's use it November 7." Posters saying "Arab American Democrat" and "Arab American Republican" were also on the walls. Arab Americans are fairly evenly split between the two parties, according to Jennifer Kauffman, director of communications and marketing for the institute.

Institute member Marwan Burgan noted that Arab Americans -- like all Americans -- "have a right to demand representation from our officials." Moreover, Burgan said, there are 135,000 Arab Americans in Virginia, and most elections in the state are decided by fewer than 135,000 votes, meaning that Arab American voters can make a difference in an election's outcome.

The institute's meet-the-candidates night, held annually in Virginia since 1987, is one of many non-partisan efforts across the country the organization runs to help better inform its community of political issues.

GROUPS REACH OUT TO EDUCATE, ENCOURAGE VOTERS

Arab Americans are among the multitudes of groups launching efforts to inform people of the importance of voting in the November 7 midterm election.

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the largest Hispanic civil rights advocacy group in the United States, and the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda, a coalition of Hispanic organizations, recently launched a campaign to mobilize Hispanic voters. The non-partisan "It Starts with You" campaign urges Hispanics to vote and

to encourage their peers to vote as well. The campaign provides public service announcements and other resources that spread the word about the importance of voting, a pocket guide on important issues and a free phone number people can call if they have questions about voting.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is asking African Americans to sign its "Arrive with 5 Pledge." Those who sign the pledge are asked to find five friends to register and vote. The campaign "will no doubt engage African American voters on the issues that matter most and motivate them to make a difference by voting and helping others get to the polls on Election Day," NAACP President and CEO Bruce S. Gordon said in a press release introducing the program.

The nonpartisan organization Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote (APIAVote) is running projects across the country to encourage their community to vote. Local groups are encouraging their neighbors to register to vote and are calling Asian Pacific Americans who often do not vote to remind them of the importance of doing so.

For more information, see 2006 Midterm Elections (<http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/democracy/elections.html>).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

Rice Heads to Asia To Rally Support for Sanctions on North Korea

By Jane Morse
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is heading to Asia to rally regional support for tough U.N. sanctions against North Korea, but she says the United States remains ready to sit down to Six-Party Talks without any preconditions.



Secretary Rice briefs the press on upcoming trip to Asia, in the State Department Press Briefing Room. State Department photo by Michael Gross.

During a press briefing October 16, Rice said she would be visiting Seoul (South Korea), Tokyo, Beijing and Moscow October 17-22 to discuss strategies for implementing U.N. Security Council Resolution 1718. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2006&m=October&x=20061014163309atiayduj0.5138056>)).

Rice said that Resolution 1718 contains "unprecedented sanctions," but noted countries must work together to advance common goals.

"Every country in the region," she said, "must share the burdens as well as the benefits of our common security."

Specifically, the resolution bans trade with North Korea on all materials with direct or dual use applications for weapons of mass destruction (WMD), prohibits nations from providing North Korea any assistance in developing or using WMD and freezes all funds and economic resources designated by the Security Council's sanctions committee as being connected with Pyongyang's WMD programs.

The resolution also calls on countries to cooperate in preventing trafficking of WMD materials by inspecting cargo to and from North Korea and prohibits the sale of luxury goods. Humanitarian goods and services are exempt from the sanctions. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2006&m=October&x=20061015183127neweolc0.8371851>)).

Pyongyang incited global condemnation when it tested a nuclear device October 9. The U.S. Office of the Director of National Intelligence confirmed October 16 that air samples collected October 11, two days after North Korea reported it had conducted an underground nuclear explosion, contain

radioactive debris. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2006&m=October&x=20061009094530attonich0.1332514>)).

North Korea also tested ballistic missiles July 4. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2006&m=July&x=20060705133920ASesuarK0.9408228>)).

Rice said the steps the world takes in countering North Korea's recalcitrance would also send a message to Iran, which is pursuing its own nuclear weapons program. "The Iranian government is watching and it can now see that the international community will respond to threats from nuclear proliferation," Rice said. "I expect the Security Council to begin work this week on an Iran sanctions resolution so the Iranian government should consider the course that it is on, which could lead simply to further isolation."

The secretary acknowledged that the world's nonproliferation regime is "strained," but added that it is "not broken."

Rice discounted reports that China may be unwilling to take harsh measures against Pyongyang. "I am not concerned that the Chinese are going to turn their backs on their obligations," she said. "I don't think they would have voted for a resolution that they did not intend to carry through on."

She also noted that Japan and Australia already have imposed

(Continued on page 16)

Bush Signs Military Commission Act To Try Terrorist Suspects

By Vince Crawley
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – President Bush has signed a new law that he says will allow terrorist suspects to receive fair trials while preserving the ability of the Central Intelligence Agency to continue interrogating suspected terrorist leaders and operatives.

"It is a rare occasion when a president can sign a bill he knows will save American lives," Bush said October 17 while signing the Military Commissions Act of 2006 into law. "I have that privilege this morning."

The new law "is one of the most important pieces of legislation in the War on Terror," Bush said.

The new law authorizes the president to establish military commissions to try unlawful enemy combatants suspected of engaging in or planning hostile acts against the United States. The United States has said that al-Qaida and Taliban fighters in U.S. custody meet the definition of "unlawful enemy combatant" under the Geneva Conventions, which govern the rights of individuals in combat. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2006&m=September&x=20060929133523hmnietua0.7587854>)).

In early 2002, President Bush authorized a system of military commissions to try foreign suspects accused of war crimes. However, in June 2006, the Supreme Court ruled that the president's plan violated the U.S. Constitution and

said military commissions needed to be authorized explicitly by the U.S. Congress. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2006&m=June&x=20060630121139hmnietua0.1040918>)).

The Supreme Court ruling led to intense political debates in Congress on how to craft a law that balanced the rights of detainees with the desire to bring suspected terrorists to justice while gathering intelligence to prevent future attacks. The Military Commissions Act includes such legal protections as presumption of innocence, the right to call and cross-examine wit-

"We will use these commissions to bring justice to the men believed to have planned the attacks of September 11, 2001," Bush said. "We'll also seek to prosecute those believed responsible for the attack on the USS Cole [in Aden, Yemen], which killed 17 American sailors six years ago last week. We will seek to prosecute an operative believed to have been involved in the bombings of the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania [in August 1998], which killed more than 200 innocent people and wounded 5,000 more."

The trials, Bush said, "will send a clear message to those who kill Americans: We will find you, and



President George W. Bush speaks during the signing of S. 3930, the Military Commissions Act of 2006, Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2006, in the East Room. Pictured in the background are, from left, Deputy Director of National Intelligence Michael Hayden; General Peter Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Attorney General Alberto Gonzales; Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Vice President Dick Cheney.

White House photo by Paul Morse

nesses, the right to legal defense and the right to not be forced to testify.

we will bring you to justice."

The Military Commission Act

(Continued on page 17)

Violence Against Children Occurs with Social Approval, U.N. Finds

Washington -- Violence is an everyday reality for far too many children in the world, and that violence often occurs with social approval, according to the findings of a comprehensive global view of violence against children released by the United Nations October 12.

The study – The U.N. Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children -- finds that violence against children is unjustifiable, preventable and pervasive.

"In every region, in contradiction to human rights obligations and children's developmental needs," according to the report's introduction, "violence against children is socially approved, and is frequently legal and State-authorized."

The report was presented to the U.N. General Assembly October 12 by its sponsors, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The Administration for Children and Families, within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, also contributed to the report. Wade Horn, the department's assistant secretary for children and families participated in its unveiling.

"We ought to be outraged whenever violence is perpetrated against children, and, most especially, by incidences of child rape, child homicide, physical abuse,

child sex trafficking and prostitution, female genital mutilation, and other forms of brutality against children," said Horn. "We wholeheartedly agree with the report's opening declaration that 'no violence against children is justifiable' and that 'all violence against children is preventable.'"

Despite the hidden nature of violence against children, the report does offer some estimates on its occurrence:

Some 53,000 children under 17 died as a result of homicide in 2002;



Estimates from 2000 suggest approximately 5.7 million children were in forced or bonded labor, 1.8 million in prostitution or pornography, and 1.2 million were victims of trafficking; and

In a targeted review of 16 developing countries, as many as 65 percent of children reported incidents of verbal or physical bullying in school.

Professor Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro was the independent expert appointed by the secretary-general to lead the study. He laid the responsibility for the prevention of abuse of the most helpless victims on national governments.

"That means prohibiting all kinds of violence against children, wherever it occurs and whoever is the perpetrator, and investing in prevention programs to address the underlying causes," Pinheiro said. "People must be held accountable for their actions but a strong legal framework is not only about sanctions, it is about sending a robust, unequivocal signal that society just will not accept violence against children."

For additional information (<http://www.childwelfare.gov/can/index.cfm>), see the Administration for Children and Families' clearinghouse for information on child abuse and neglect.

The full text (<http://www.violencestudy.org/r25>) (PDF, 34 pages) of the U.N. report is available on the study's Web site.

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Islamic Society Director Challenges Extremist . . .

(Continued from page 11)

We accept the divine scheme of diversity in the world and you want to impose conformity. We respect every human being simply because he or she is a creation of the divine, and you hate people based on their religion and ethnicity.

We support freedom and liberty and justice, and you promote bigotry, murder and strangulation.

You will never be able to find a sympathetic voice amidst us. Our differences with others will never lead us to do things that are fundamentally wrong in our faith, i.e.

taking the lives of innocent people and killing others because they are different.

So on Sept. 11, when you will be hiding in your caves, we will be out in the streets paying tribute to those who you killed because you failed to see the beauty of life. We will condemn you once again the same way we have been doing ever since 9/11 because we are Muslim Americans.

(Aslam Abdullah is director of the Islamic Society of Nevada.)

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Rice Heads to Asia To Rally Support for Sanctions on . . .

(Continued from page 13)

additional sanctions against North Korea above and beyond those spelled out in Resolution 1718.

The Secretary of State held out the possibility that Pyongyang could avoid the additional suffering that the sanctions will impose on the nation if it returned to the Six-Party Talks that include South Korea, Japan, China, Russia and the United States. On September 19, 2005, Pyongyang signed a declaration of principles in which it agreed to end its nuclear weapons program and rejoin the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/Archive/2005/Sep/19->

210095.html).

Rice pointed out that a number of countries have agreed to abandon their nuclear weapons programs voluntarily and cited Libya and South Africa as examples.

While reiterating U.S. deterrent commitments to its allies in the region, Rice said the United States has no desire to increase tensions in response to North Korea's intransigence.

"No one has an interest in seeing the trade in dangerous materials or weapons of mass destruction," the secretary said.

The United States, she said, will use Resolution 1718 as a "tool" and use it "wisely."

"I do hear states saying that they want to be certain that it won't ratchet up conflict," she said. "We have no desire to ratchet up conflict either. But we'll have some discussions on precisely how this will be carried out."

For more information on U.S. policy, see The U.S. and the Korean Peninsula (http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/east_asia_pacific/north_korea.html).

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Bush Signs Military Commission Act To Try Terrorist . . .

(Continued from page 14)

"complies with both the spirit and the letter of our international obligations," Bush said. The act describes specific offenses that, if committed by U.S. personnel against detainees, would be considered crimes. In addition, the act bars military commissions from considering testimony obtained since December 30, 2005, through interrogation techniques that involve cruel or inhumane treatment. December 30, 2005, is the date President Bush signed the 2006 supplemental Defense Department appropriations bill that included a section, known as the McCain amendment, setting standards for humane treatment of detainees.

"As I've said before, the United States does not torture," Bush said. "It's against our laws and against our values."

Bush said the Military Commissions Act "will allow the Central Intelligence Agency to continue its program for questioning key terrorist leaders and operatives like Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the man believed to be the mastermind of the September 11th ... attacks." (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2006&m=September&x=20060914165153esnamfuk0.7021753>).

A White House fact sheet listed several instances in which CIA in-

terrogations helped save American lives or led to the apprehension of suspected terrorists. According to the fact sheet, the CIA program has helped the United States:

- Gain vital intelligence from Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and Ramzi bin al Shibh, two men believed to have helped plan and facilitate the 9/11 attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people.

- Break up a cell of 17 Southeast Asian terrorist operatives being groomed for attacks inside the United States.

- Uncover key operatives in al-Qaida's biological weapons program, including a cell developing anthrax to be used in terrorist attacks.

- Identify terrorists who were sent to survey potential targets within the United States, including financial buildings in major cities along the U.S. East Coast.

- Stop a planned strike on U.S. Marines in Djibouti, a planned attack on a the U.S. Consulate in Karachi, Pakistan and a plot to hijack passenger planes and fly them into Heathrow Airport and Canary Wharf in London.

- The Pentagon's American Force Press Service reported that trials under military commissions are not likely to begin until late spring or summer 2007. Pentagon officials said the majority of 440 detainees held at Guantanamo Bay Naval

Base in Cuba would not face military commissions. Officials estimated that about 75 detainees would face commissions, which will hear cases involving violations of the laws of war and other grave offenses.

A transcript (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/10/20061017-1.html>) of President Bush's statement, and a fact sheet on the Military Commissions Act of 2006 (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/10/20061017.html>) are posted on the White House Web site.

For additional information, see Detainee Issues (http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/human_rights/detainees.html).

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"Regime Change" Not a U.S. Focus, Democracy Group's Chief Says

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- In funding democracy programs overseas, the United States is more interested in the long-term "mobilization" of the spirit of liberty "intrinsic" to people everywhere rather than quick "regime change," says Carl Gershman, president of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

Gershman spoke at an October 6 luncheon at the headquarters of Diplomatic and Consular Officers Retired Inc. (DACOR), located just blocks from the White House.

NED is a congressionally supported, but privately administered, grant-making nonprofit institution that since the early 1980s has funded democracy training worldwide. Its programs range from training election officials to advising independent media and helping civic organizations organize politically. The organization makes over 1,000 grants each year with an annual budget of \$74 million, according to Gershman. Each grant averages between \$40,000 and \$50,000.

The U.S. government spends about \$1.5 billion annually on democracy-related programs worldwide, he added.

The important point to remember, Gershman told his audience of retired U.S. diplomats, is that "this [democracy-promotion] work is long-term. We're not interested in regime change." He added that there is always a risk that a government perceived as not democratic, if toppled, could be replaced

with an even more repressive regime.

"We know what happened in Cuba in 1958-59 and what happened in Iran in 1978-79" when authoritarian rulers were replaced by even worse totalitarian regimes, Gershman said.

The goal of NED and ancillary democracy operations like the Na-



Carl Gershman
President of the National
Endowment for Democracy (NED)

tional Democratic Institute and International Republican Institute, Gershman said, is to facilitate "peaceful political transitions to democracy that we saw in Ukraine in the 'Orange Revolution' or in Georgia in the 'Rose Revolution.'"

"This cannot be a short-term objective of policy," the NED chief said. "What we are trying to do" over a span of time is "to open up the possibility of consolidating and expanding political space based on a system of rule of law and human rights so that a country can be integrated into the community of democratic nations."

Gershman added, "This is not social engineering. We don't send people into countries saying: 'We're going to build for you a democracy.' Or build democratic institutions like you build a bridge. It has to come from within" to take hold and be sustainable.

Actually, "democracy isn't going to happen in any country unless it comes from within," Gershman said. "Unless there are indigenous, local forces that want it to happen. We can help those forces but ultimately they have to be prepared to at times struggle, even put their lives on the line, because this is not just a bureaucratic process."

Gershman said NED was pleased to see that entrenched democracies like the Czech Republic and Poland, who were recipients of NED help during their post-communist transitions, now were sending their own democracy-promotion teams to other eastern European nations at their own expense.

"These two countries saw how critical it was to get help at their turning-point from Soviet domination to home-grown democracy and they want to share that knowledge now with others," Gershman concluded.

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Private Groups Key in Democracy-Building, State Official Says

By Michelle Austein
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Members of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) must work with nongovernmental organizations, human rights defenders and each other to put the principles of democracy into practice, said Barry F. Lowenkron, assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor.

"There is no such thing as a perfect democracy," Lowenkron said in his address to the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw, Poland, October 13. Every country, including the United States, must uphold the principles of tolerance, rule of law and minority rights, he said.

Lowenkron addressed the importance of nations working with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to promote democracy, saying the contributions of civil society organizations remain vital to fulfilling the promise of the Helsinki Final Act.

The Helsinki Final Act, signed in 1975 by 35 countries, recognizes that countries' proper treatment of their citizens is an important element of regional security. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2005&m=August&x=20050801154539aclahtneweol0.8074457&t=eur/eur-latest.html>).

Lowenkron said NGOs' work in addressing both domestic and international challenges is crucial.

"In today's world, the problems confronting states are too complex even for the most powerful governments to tackle alone," Lowenkron said. NGOs play a vital role in advancing human rights and democracy, he said.

Lowenkron noted that some countries have adopted laws and regu-



Barry F. Lowenkron
Assistant Secretary of State
for Democracy, Human
Rights and Labor

lations that restrict or intimidate NGOs or force them to shut down. "Restricting the political space of NGOs only limits a society's own political and economic growth," he said.

A major focus of the OSCE's work must be to champion the efforts of NGOs as they foster peaceful, democratic change, Lowenkron said. "When NGOs are under siege, democracy is undermined."

Lowenkron also called on members to support and strengthen the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). The office,

a division of the OSCE, works with governments and NGOs to strengthen the rule of law, civil society and democratic institutions, foster free and fair elections, promote tolerance, eliminate human trafficking and ensure the equal rights of men and women.

The ODIHR has helped transform countries in Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia from dictatorships to democracies, Lowenkron said. "These tasks, by their very nature, require a determined, long-term effort," he said. However, noted Lowenkron, many states are still in the early stages of democratic transition. The ODIHR faces stiff resistance in countries where challenges to democratic reform are greatest, Lowenkron said, and called on nations to strengthen the ODIHR's capacity to help meet those challenges.

A transcript (http://osce.usmission.gov/archive/2006/10/HDIM_Closing_10_13_06.pdf) (PDF, 3 pages) of Lowenkron's remarks is available on the U.S. Mission to the OSCE's Web site.

Additional information (<http://www.osce.org/>) about the OSCE is available on the organization's Web site.

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Memorial Held in Washington for Murdered Russian Journalist

By James Correa
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) held a memorial gathering October 16 in Washington in honor of Anna Politkovskaya, the noted Russian journalist and author who was murdered in her Moscow apartment building on October 7. The ceremony included remarks from officials, colleagues and friends.

"Anna Politkovskaya was one of the bravest and most respected investigative journalists in Russia," said Paula Dobriansky, U.S. under secretary of state for democracy and global affairs. "She embodied fully the role of the journalist in a free society: to bring the truth, especially about difficult issues, to the citizens of her country."

Politkovskaya "was particularly passionate about Chechnya and devoted much of her career to covering and writing about human rights abuses and other atrocities of the war there, including the plight of Chechen refugees," Dobriansky said.

"Killings of this type have a chilling effect on media freedom in Russia," she added. "These are not simply crimes against individuals; they are crimes against the Russian people, who want and merit a free society."

She also denounced the "contract-style murders" of 12 other journalists in Russia in the past six years, including American citizen Paul Klebnikov, who was killed on July 9, 2004. (See related article ([http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-](http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2004&m=July&x=20040714183635xlrennef0.4571192)

[english&y=2004&m=July&x=20040714183635xlrennef0.4571192](http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2004&m=July&x=20040714183635xlrennef0.4571192)).

"The United States urges the Russian government to conduct an immediate and thorough investigation in order to find, prosecute, and bring to justice all those responsible for this heinous murder," said State Department spokesman Sean McCormack on the day of Politkovskaya's death. The intimidation and murder of journalists, he said, are "an affront to free and independent media and to democratic values." (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=October&x=20061008105438attoc-nich0.7407953>).)

In the days before her death, Politkovskaya was working on a story about torture and abductions in Chechnya, her editor at the weekly newspaper Novaya Gazeta (New Journal) said in interviews October 8. He praised Politkovskaya as someone who was never afraid and a complete professional in all her work, according to a Voice of America news account.

Politkovskaya exhibited a "lonely heroism" that "stood for something transcendental, stood for something utterly good," said former National Security Adviser

Zbigniew Brzezinski at the memorial, which was held at NED headquarters.

"She was a person who is very direct, deeply committed to the truth and doing the right thing," NED President Carl Gershman said of Politkovskaya. "She despised injustice and human cruelty."

NED is a private, nonprofit organization created in 1983 and works to strengthen democratic institutions around the world.

An NED press release said the memorial was held nine days after Politkovskaya's death, the day, according to Russian peasant tradition, when the soul leaves the body and is guided by angels to its next destination.

The Associated Press reported that Politkovskaya had collected witness accounts and photos of tor-



tured bodies for an article scheduled for publication on October 9.

News accounts have described Politkovskaya, a 48-year-old mother of two, as a champion for

(Continued on page 23)

Partnership Battles Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS in Botswana

By Margaret Davis, MD, MPH, director of BOTUSA, a partnership between Botswana's Ministry of Health and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

BOTUSA: A Partnership in Disease Research

The sub-Saharan African nation of Botswana is at the epicenter of the worldwide HIV pandemic. About 24 percent of the population between ages 15 and 49 carry the virus—one of the world's highest prevalence rates.

The 2006 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic, issued by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS in May 2006, reported 18,000 deaths from the disease last year. Deaths of young adults in recent years have left 120,000 orphans, nearly 7 percent of Botswana's population.

AIDS is known as a fatal disease, but the actual cause of death for many victims is tuberculosis (TB), the most frequently occurring opportunistic disease that attacks the weakened immune system of HIV-positive persons. In fact, a study conducted jointly by U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Botswana researchers has shown that 38 percent of AIDS deaths in Botswana were actually due to TB.

TB-HIV CO-EPIDEMIC

The dual occurrence of TB and HIV infections is known as a co-epidemic. It is a painful burden for this landlocked nation of 1.7 million people, but the Botswana gov-

ernment is recognized for progressive and comprehensive policies to deal with the disease.

Since 1995, Botswana's Ministry of Health and the CDC have collaborated on programs and research to address the AIDS crisis. The partnership, called BOTUSA (pronounced bo-TOO-sah), involves more than 170 international, local, and support staff working to provide technical assistance, consultation, funding, program implementation, and research

collaboration is a preventive therapy program. Using isoniazid, a proven TB preventive therapy, the program is attempting to prevent tuberculosis in up to 60 percent of people living with HIV. The Isoniazid Preventive Therapy (IPT) Programme, the first of its kind to be introduced anywhere in the world, is working to put all persons in the country living with HIV/AIDS on a preventive regimen of isoniazid to keep TB at bay.

Enrollment in the IPT program has also meant that HIV-infected persons are getting better access to care and antiretroviral drugs.

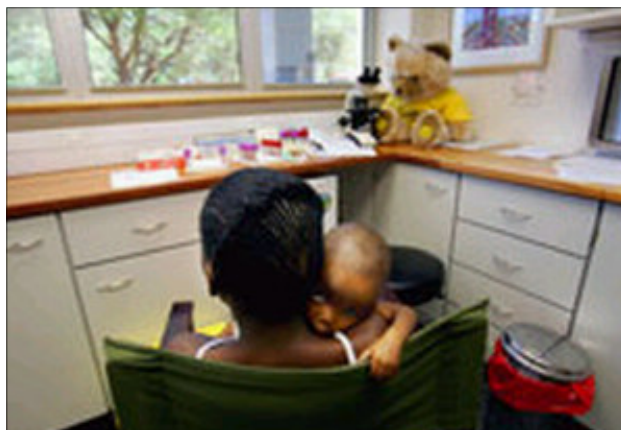
Health officials hoped the isoniazid treatment would provide a better-than-60-percent protection rate and longer lasting protection against active TB, however, so CDC and the Ministry of Health are conducting a trial involving 2,000 people to determine if continuous isoniazid therapy prevents more disease than the six-month course of drug prophylaxis.

RESEARCH AND TRAINING

Along with the latest projects, BOTUSA has produced a significant amount of research that has contributed to the world's body of knowledge about TB in the AIDS era, including surveys of drug-resistant TB, the population's TB infection rate, and the behavior and responses of patients and clinicians living amid a co-epidemic.

BOTUSA also provides more thor-

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A woman and her child wait for a blood test at the Baylor Children's Clinical Center in Gaborone, Botswana. (AP Images)

devoted to prevention, care, support, and surveillance of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and related conditions.

The principal goal of BOTUSA's TB-HIV research is to expand knowledge of the relationship between epidemic tuberculosis and HIV disease in resource-constrained settings to develop better prevention strategies for TB control in Botswana and similar environments.

The major achievement of this more than 10-year-old research

HIV/AIDS and Malnutrition Locked in "Vicious Cycle"

By Charlene Porter
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- In many of the world's poor regions, where HIV/AIDS has taken the worst toll, the virus and malnutrition are locked in a "vicious cycle" that worsens the impact of both.

"Insufficient intake [of calories] can enhance the progression of the virus," said Suneetha Kadiyala, a scientist at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) who participated in a panel on food security and HIV/AIDS at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington October 16.

The discussion was held in observance of World Food Day. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2006&m=October&x=20061012092416AKlle nnoCcM0.6302454>).

After six years of study, Kadiyala said, the damaging relationship between malnutrition and HIV/AIDS is becoming better understood. It can begin when a family member first begins to exhibit symptoms after HIV infection. His or her capacity to work – whether as a farmer or a wage earner – is diminished, possibly affecting household income and the availability of food for an entire family.

Already compromised by the presence of HIV, the immune system becomes even less effective at defending against infection when the body is malnourished.

As anti-retroviral drugs (ARV) become more widely available in poor

regions where AIDS is taking the greatest toll, Kadiyala said, scientists also are discovering that malnutrition compromises the efficacy and increases the toxicity of medications.

"Improving the nutrition status of people is critical if ARV treatment is going to be successful," she said.

Food insecurity also can increase individual risk for exposure to HIV, researchers have found. People who are hungry will leave their homes for food, expanding their social exposures and engaging in desperate behaviors that can make them more vulnerable to infection.

With this hard-won understanding, IFPRI is working to create expanded networks of policy-makers and health experts to raise awareness about the links among poverty, nutrition and disease in hopes of finding wider solutions.

Even though recent research is revealing more about the complexity of the interaction between HIV/AIDS and malnutrition, the need to include food assistance in a program to support those suffering from HIV/AIDS is well understood.

The U.N. World Food Programme, the sponsor of World Food Day, is feeding 9 million people infected with HIV/AIDS, according to Jordan Dey, director of the program's U.S. relations office.

"Hunger is the greatest public health threat, and it undermines a nation's development," Dey said.

The United States is the largest donor of food assistance world-

wide, investing more than \$2.4 billion in that cause in 2005, according to a report presented to the U.S. Congress in early 2006.

The U.S. Agency for International Development and the U.S. Department of Agriculture are key players in delivering food assistance and supporting efforts under the President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) to reduce malnutrition among people living with HIV/AIDS and those affected by the disease.

Report on Food and Nutrition for People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), released by the Global AIDS Coordinator's Office in May, outlines the specific objectives of PEPFAR nutrition programs:

- Improve the quantity and quality of diets among PLWHA,

- Build or replenish body stores of essential nutrients,

- Prevent or stabilize weight loss,

- Preserve and gain muscle mass,

- Prevent diarrhea and other infections that affect nutritional status, and

- Speed recuperation from HIV-related symptoms that affect food consumption and dietary intake.

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)♦

Memorial Held in Washington for Murdered Russian . . .

(Continued from page 20)

human rights and an unsparing critic of Russian authorities, who drew both death threats and high praise for her unflinching coverage of the war in Chechnya and ethnic-based conflicts throughout the North Caucasus.

She served as a mediator between Russian security forces and Chechen terrorists who took hundreds of hostages in a Moscow theater in 2002.

Politkovskaya received numerous journalism awards for her bravery and commitment to uncompromising investigative journalism. She was awarded the Golden Pen Award from the Russian Union of Journalists in 2000, the Prize for Journalism and Democracy from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), as

well as awards from the Overseas Press Club and Amnesty International, according to the State Department.

An evening candlelight vigil, organized by several human rights and journalist organizations, was held on October 16 for Politkovskaya in front of the Russian Embassy in Washington. The vigil included speakers from Amnesty International, the International Center for Journalists, International Women's Media Foundation and Freedom House.

A transcript (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=texttrans-english&y=2006&m=October&x=20061017121206xjsnom-miS0.6695825>) of Dobriansky's remarks is available on the USINFO Web site.

For more information on U.S. policy, see Freedom of the Press (http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/democracy/rule_of_law/press_freedom.html).

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Partnership Battles Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS . . .

(Continued from page 21)

ough training for Botswana's urban and rural health care workers, an activity that will result in improved disease surveillance, patient screening, and care.

Botswana is also one of 15 target nations receiving assistance under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

The United States has provided funding for purchase of antiretrovi-

ral drugs and contributed to the development and implementation of national systems for training, quality assurance, and guidelines applied to clinical delivery of antiretroviral therapy, HIV laboratory, and monitoring and evaluation of antiretroviral therapy.

These contributions have strengthened the success of Botswana's national strategy against AIDS.

The above article appears in the October issue of the State Depart-

ment's electronic journal, Global Issues. For additional information, see the complete issue, entitled Sharing Science: Global Partnerships (<http://usinfo.state.gov/pub/ejournalusa.html>).

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

Bird Flu in Humans Reappears in Egypt

By Charlene Porter
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – Egyptian health authorities have spotted the first case of bird flu in a human since May, a report that also was confirmed by the World Health Organization October 11.

Fourteen cases of the highly pathogenic avian influenza strain H5N1 appeared in Egypt from March to May, making it the nation outside Asia suffering the highest prevalence of the disease.

The current case involves a 39-year-old female patient who developed symptoms at the end of September and remains hospitalized in stable condition, according to a WHO situation report.

The report also confirms that the woman had a flock of ducks around her home, and recent experience slaughtering and defeathering them after illness appeared in her birds.

Around the world, 253 people have been infected by the H5N1 strain and 148 have died. The vast majority of exposures have arisen in circumstances similar to those described in the latest report --- exposure through proximity to ailing birds.

Health experts worry most about cases in which they cannot find an animal source of exposure. If disease investigators cannot trace an individual's infection with H5N1 to ailing birds, it could mean the virus is being transmitted another way and that conditions favorable for development of a pandemic could be mounting.

Historically, influenza pandemics have developed when an avian form of influenza mutates to become transmissible among humans.

That is what experts warn could happen with the H5N1 virus, which has spread so widely and caused such serious disease in birds, with hundreds of millions destroyed or dead from disease in the three years since the strain's emergence.

INFECTION IN PIGS, CATS IN INDONESIA

Indonesian agricultural officials confirm that H5N1 has been detected in pigs and cats, according to news reports. This is a worrisome development because it is well established that pigs could become living test tubes for the emergence of a new viral form easily transmitted among humans.

Pigs are susceptible to both avian flu strains and to human strains. If one animal were to become infected with H5N1 and a human strain, that pig could act as the Petri dish in which a viral strain is born that could set off a human pandemic.

The report of H5N1-infected pigs follows an earlier report in which the virus was detected in another region of Indonesia. Similar reports emerged from China in 2001 and 2003.

Stray cats reportedly were infected with H5N1 after being exposed to birds at live markets, according to the Indonesian Environment Information Center as reported by the Jakarta Post.

Other instances of infection among cats -- wild and domestic -- have

been reported in Europe and Asia, but the role of the feline family in further transmitting the disease is not known.

Indonesia has experienced the worst national total of human infection with avian influenza, reporting 52 deaths

VIRUS SURVEILLANCE IN UNITED STATES

Early in 2006, when the virus was ripping its way across Europe and the Middle East, U.S. observers predicted the inevitable arrival of H5N1 in the Western Hemisphere.

So far, that has not happened, though wildlife testing has discovered the appearance of other, low-pathogenic flu strains in the United States that are common and not considered a major health threat.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and state wildlife authorities across the country are engaged in a widespread monitoring and surveillance campaign of wild birds.

Fifteen thousand birds have been tested over the last few months. It is anticipated that 50,000 to 70,000 fowl will be sampled for signs of a highly pathogenic avian flu strain over the next few months.

The United States also is supporting disease surveillance and detection activities in other nations considered highly vulnerable to human outbreaks because of traditional livestock-keeping methods.

The United States has invested almost \$400 million in the international effort to control and contain avian influenza to help stave off a human pandemic. ♦

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Trade Still Prime Engine for Prosperity in . . .

(Continued from page 6)

Liberia, Angola and the East African Community [Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya]," he explained.

More importantly, Moore said, "These new TIFAs will complement our other African TIFA partners -- the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WEAMU), South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria and Mozambique -- helping to establish a network of African states and regional organizations committed to reform."

Separately, WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy told "Investment Forum 2006" in Johannesburg, South Africa, via a videoconference October 10, that the WTO is putting together a comprehensive plan "to help developing countries, and African countries in particular, address some of their supply-side constraints, includ-

ing poor transport and general trade infrastructure networks that will help enhance their ability to benefit from trade opening."

He said the international trade organization also is working with several partners, including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the U.N. Development Programme, regional development banks and bilateral donors, to help countries deal with issues related to product standards and regulations, among others.

For more information on U.S. policies, see Trade and Economics (<http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/>) and Trade and Economic Development (http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/trade_economic_development.html).

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Somali Women Hope To Affect Khartoum . . .

(Continued from page 8)

Asked if she believed she could duplicate the success of the women's movement in negotiations with the traditionally Islamic ICU movement, Elmi said that when she had earlier contacts with their leaders, "they treated me well.

"I am not sure what their political and social agenda is. I will take a wait-and-see attitude," she said. One thing she was sure of, Elmi said, is that "we are sick and tired of warlordism."

Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer,

speaking of the ICU, told a June 16 State Department press briefing: "We are reserving judgment about the Islamic Court Union. They're signaling to us their intent to work in the context of the priorities set by the international community; that is, preventing terrorism, supporting stability, working with the Transitional Federal Institutions. But we will have to make a true judgment by their actual actions."

The ICU, she added, is "a heterogeneous group, and so it's very likely that there are elements within it that may be more extremist and others that are more moderate, so we will have to see how

they negotiate with the Transitional Federal Institutions."

For more information on U.S. policy, see Africa (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/>) and Women in the Global Community (http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/human_rights/women.html).

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